



The Saskatchewan Provincial Election Campaign of 1908

*Premier Scott in a Notable Speech at Rosthern
Clearly States the Issues Which Rendered
it Necessary and Analyzes the Conduct of
the Campaign Which Followed.*

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Premier Scott at Rosthern

Hon. Walter Scott, Premier of Saskatchewan, Speaking at a Banquet tendered Gerhard Enz, M.L.A., at Rosthern on Wednesday, August 26, 1908, Dealt at Some Length with the Matters Which Resulted in the Dissolution of the Legislature the Preceding Month and the Questions Which Arose in the Subsequent Election Campaign. After Referring to a Number of Purely Local Aspects of the Campaign, Mr. Scott Next Proceeded as Follows:

"Personalities" Issue.

"I have noticed that some outside newspapers—papers both unfriendly and friendly to the Liberal cause—have been remarking that the Saskatchewan campaign was marred by rather bitter personal and undignified features. I am perhaps too sensitive. Perhaps I take these remarks more to myself than the writers intended. But I wish my own friends outside the Province to clearly understand the reason for the direct charge I made in the campaign against the Conservative candidate in Regina city. First, let me state that I know the charge I made against Mr. Laird to be true and I am going to prove the truth of it in the courts. (Cheers). Let there be no misconception about that. But it is contended that whether true or not it had no bearing upon the issues at stake between the Liberal party and the Conservative party, between the Haultain policy and the Scott policy. It is held that the provincial questions ought not to be made dependent on anything that may have been done by a member of the Regina City Council three or four years ago. I am ready to agree to that. I say now what I said when making the charge against Mr. Laird, that I made it specifically for the purpose of bringing the campaign de-

bates back into their proper channels. From first to last, during the 1905 campaign not a prominent Liberal nor a Liberal journal made one single utterance which could be construed into an attack against the private character of an opponent, while myself and each of my colleagues were vilified and slandered shamelessly and persistently by Mr. Haultain himself, by McInnis, by Mr. Laird and by nearly every Conservative paper not only in Saskatchewan, but from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In the intervening years these personal attacks were continued. Not alone were myself and my colleagues pursued. Not even the Lieut-Governor, nor any of the judges on our Supreme Court Bench escaped their vilification. The Liberal party has a set of opponents led in this Province by Mr. Haultain who had shown themselves to be absolutely reckless, shameless and pitiless in this respect. At Mr. Haultain's first meeting in the recent contest he and Mr. Laird resumed their programme of personal vilification, not by any manly method of direct charge which could be met—they did not display the courage to do that—but by cowardly generalities about ballot thieving and innuendo and insinuation about graft which they lacked the manliness to put in the form of a charge.

"Now I make no claim to saint-hood, but I do know this, that my own character and personal record of conduct either privately or politically and I say the same of each of my colleagues, Mr. Calder, Mr. Motherwell and Mr. Turgeon, and if my recent colleague the present Judge Lamont, will bear examination in comparison with the personal record of conduct of Mr. Haultain, Mr. Laird or McInnis. (Cheers). Regina people who know the facts that I know will think that is not saying much, but let it go at that. How long in all conscience do my tender eastern newspaper friends think that I ought to let my colleagues and myself be personally villified by a set of men, who have plenty of spots of their own to hide and never strike back? I know now that I remained silent far too long. My counter-stroke was immediately effective, but it was given too late. Another may be needed. We shall see.

How Mr. Calder Was Defeated

"The whole province is surprised at the defeat in Milestone of my colleague Mr. Calder. So was I, both surprised and puzzled. I know now how he was defeated. Mr. Calder was defeated by a completely organized and systematic campaign of the most outrageously poisonous lies ever concocted against the character of a public man, and Mr. Haultain's cowardly but clever method of insinuations and abuse of the word graft in relation to Mr. Calder was a part of the systematic campaign. I am not in the habit of blinking facts, and I am now face to face with the ugly fact that a maliciously planned and systematic scheme of cowardly lying slander engineered by Mr. Haultain himself has been temporarily successful against a young man whose ability and capacity for public service is second to that of no man that I know of in Western Canada excepting possibly Clifford Sifton. (Cheers).

Cannot Afford to Lose Calder

"Let me ask this question. How could Mr. Calder do any grafting even if he were so disposed? He has charge of departments which do nothing with money except pay school grants and official salaries. I manage the only spending depart-

ment, at least such was the position until a month ago, when the telephone department was organized. I purchased the parliament buildings site and awarded the Lyall contract and bought the Moose Jaw Court House site. I or my deputy have let all the big and little contracts given out by the Government in three years. The single contract in the whole term given by Mr. Calder was the Morang readers contract. As one who knows something about the cost of paper-and-presswork and book binding I give my word that I am puzzled to see how Morang can give us the books for the money we pay him under that contract, and escape loss, and unless he can better his position by getting his books into the schools of other Provinces besides Saskatchewan and Alberta I don't believe he can escape loss. (Cheers). Anybody who knows the details of making books and who will examine those Morang readers will tell you the same thing. Mr. Calder and Premier Rutherford together succeeded in making a contract with Morang which to me is simply amazingly good from the public standpoint. The book itself is beyond criticism in every detail, and the price is wonderfully low. For \$4,000 a year we buy the quantity of those excellent books sufficient to put them in the hands of every one of the thousands of pupils in our schools throughout this whole Province. (Cheers). Where in goodness' name is there room for graft in that contract? (Cheers). The facts only have to be reviewed to show the sheer absurdity of the insinuation which Mr. Haultain made and which was industriously and systematically and maliciously whispered in the ear of the Milestone electors until it affected enough of them in what was anyway an evenly divided district to turn the scale. But let me tell Mr. Haultain that while a man may be temporarily damaged by lies, any such campaign must eventually fail against a man of the sterling honesty and brilliant intellect which I know to be Mr. Calder's real characteristics. (Cheers). If the Saskatchewan Government has made a really wonderful record in law-making and administration in three years, Mr. Calder is entitled to

more than a proportionate share of the credit because he did in the three years the lion's share of the brain work. Nobody can examine the work done by the Saskatchewan Government since 1905 and not be surprised at the enormous amount of it, and I believe the quality is good. I have proved each of them, and I do not believe I am mistaken in the implicit confidence I repose in the ability and integrity of each one of my colleagues including Mr. Calder. Until some person gives me stronger reason than the coward's whispered slander, that confidence will not be withdrawn, and while my confidence in my colleagues remains the Government of Saskatchewan will stand together or fall together. (Tremendous cheers). I cannot afford to lose Mr. Calder. The Province cannot afford to lose his services. We will not lose him. (Cheers).

Haultain a Coward

And when the people have had time to realize the cowardly kind of attack of which Mr. Haultain has been guilty toward the Minister of Education, I am greatly mistaken if the attack will not prove a boomerang. I have never said it before of Mr. Haultain, but I do say it now, and I say it with all the emphasis I can give to the word, that he is a coward. I say that he has played the coward's part towards Mr. Calder, and I shall adhere to my statement until Mr. Haultain displays the manliness to either put his Morang contract imputations in a form to allow the facts to be investigated in a court of law or fully retracts and apologizes for what he has said and helps to undo the effect of the campaign of lies which was carried on in Milestone. (Cheers). That is a plain proposition and a fair one. Mr. Haultain must have the Morang contract examined in a court of law, or he must publicly confess that there is nothing wrong in the contract. The only alternative is that he accepts and carries before Saskatchewan and before all Canada the brand of the coward and the name of one willing to stab and traduce the character of a fellow-man unfairly and treacherously behind innuendo. (Cheers). He cannot satisfy me by

pleading that he has made no charge. That is simply an aggravation of his cowardly tactics. His insinuations about graft gave the color of his authority to the army of lying slanders who whispered the poison in the ear of practically every elector in Milestone district, and until he does one of the two things I have named he will continue to occupy the position of a coward. When I had a personal matter to allege against Mr. Laird I did not skulk behind innuendo. (Cheers). I put myself at once within the arm of the law. My method may have lacked dignity, but none of the dictionaries tell me that there is anything in common between dignity and cowardice. If my method lacked dignity and if Mr. Haultain's method is the dignified one then all I can say is let me be saved from dignity. (Cheers). If when I want to strike I can only do it with dignity by skulking behind a hedge and stabbing my opponent in the back, then dignity and I part company. The western method is my method, and the western method is to fight in the open face to face. (Cheers). I struck Mr. Laird and I struck hard, but I did it in the open, not with whispered lies but with a distinct charge. I left Mr. Laird opportunity to seek redress. That is what I ask Mr. Haultain to do. Let him give Mr. Calder a chance for redress. Let him come out into the open from behind the hedge of innuendo and play the man. Or let him show some manliness by admitting frankly that there is nothing wrong in the Morang contract, which fact he knows perfectly well. (Cheers). When he made his first statement five months ago he may have been sincere in his suspicions. He had not seen the books, and it was true that Morang was being paid more per book than other firms asked. But now he has seen the books and knows, for instance, that we pay Morang 13 cents for a Primer that costs Morang 11 cents to produce in New York, 7 cents being the cost of the binding item alone, whereas the total cost of production of the Canada Publishing Company's Primer was 5 cents, binding and all, now he has seen the books and knows the full facts. I say he cannot fail to know that the Morang contract is a most excellent contract and that

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the price we pay under that contract is remarkably low. (Cheers). He cannot fail to know that we have procured the very best book contract ever made by an Education Department in Canada. He cannot fail to know that the suspicions he has created against Mr. Calder are entirely unfounded and unjust and unworthy. And if he is not completely lost to all sense of decency and honor and manliness and fair dealing between man and man he will publicly withdraw his mean insinuations. He will either do that or he will give Mr. Calder the chance to clear up the matter in a court of law. If he does neither I say again Mr. Haultain will stand as a coward before the public. (Cheers). These are strong words to apply to a man in Mr. Haultain's position, a man who was Premier many years, a man who is now a party leader and who is looked up to by many people, a man who has been held in respect and high esteem by many people in both parties. I speak strongly because I feel strongly. For the very reason that he is who he is, there is all the greater need why Mr. Haultain must take steps to regain the respect which by his course towards Mr. Calder he has forfeited. Both by precept and example I have shown him the way. I did not hide behind insinuation regarding Mr. Laird. I have proved my readiness to go to court, to make good what I had to say concerning him. (Cheers).

Must and Will be Reciprocity

"I am equally ready to confine discussion to purely public issues as we did on our part in 1905, but if this is to be done it must be done by both parties. There must be reciprocity. There is going to be reciprocity. Unless and until our opponents cease attacking private character from now on they may expect reciprocal attacks. The Laird counter-stroke was the first and it remains for Mr. Haultain to say whether it shall be the last. (Cheers). I make no claim to perfection for my colleagues nor for myself, but the one sided game of personal attacks was permitted to go on too long. If that game is to go on in future two are going to play it. (Cheers). It is a game not of my seeking, and a game little to my lik-

ing, but it was forced upon me by the tactics of our opponents. That, coupled with the truth of the charge I made against Mr. Laird by which according to some Eastern papers, the Saskatchewan campaign was marred. An explanation seems needed, but I want it to be clearly understood that I am making no apology and have no apology to make. If the past five weeks had to be gone over again I can see lots of room for improvement in our plan of campaign, improvement which would have saved at least four or five seats that are temporarily lost to the Government, but in the Laird matter I would do again exactly what I did a month ago—(cheers)—and could I go back to the autumn of 1905 and fight that contest over again my friends who wanted to strike back then would not ask twice for the permission either. (Cheers). And about those four or five lost seats to which I refer I strongly suspect now that the people composing them regret the fact of their loss even more keenly than I do myself—(laughter)—and would rejoice if they could only remedy what they did or rather what they neglected to do on 14th August. (Cheers). But you know it is useless crying over spilt milk. I have no regrets. In some of the cases the blame was largely or anyway partly my own but I cannot reproach myself because I did all I could do in the very best way I knew how—(cheers)—and nobody's foresight is quite as true as his hindsight. In others of the cases no share of the blame was mine and the people in those seats must themselves shoulder the full responsibility of the outcome."

The Election Issues.

The Premier next devoted attention to the Land question and Hudson's Bay road, and said it was remarkable that so few of the acts of legislation and administration of the Government had been made issues in the contest. The other issue raised by Mr. Haultain was the question of the dissolution; Mr. Scott continued:

We were accused of dissolving the house without reason, and improperly. What is the fact? Mr. Haultain in the same breath declared that we were never legally elected, and that we were pursuing a reckless, extravagant, dangerous policy, and jeopardizing the position of the Province.

If he believed these things? If he really believed that the Government did not hold power by the will of the majority, how could he think any day too early for the people to have opportunity to remove us? If he really believed what he was saying about the consequences of our policy, should he not have rejoiced over the speediest possible prospect of ending that policy? Was not his declaration that we ought to have held on another full year the most effective answer to his own charges against us? Could it mean anything else than that there was no very serious grievance, and that on the whole our management of affairs was reasonably satisfactory? In this, as in so many matters, Mr. Haultain himself gave the complete answer to his own accusations, just as he did in 1905 regarding the school question by declaring that if he was made a dictator here he would not change the school law, and as he did regarding the land question, by declaring his willingness to admit that the land terms granted us would result as well for the Province, as would the adoption of his own land scheme.

Constitutional Reason for Dissolution

Now, was there no reason for the dissolution in July? How in the world could Mr. Haultain say, so when he had in May declared most positively that 25 Members were too few to adequately represent our growing population? He declared, and I declared in May, that a larger Assembly was required. He said that 50 seats were needed. I deemed 41 seats sufficient, and he accepted my view. Was Mr. Haultain insincere? If he was sincere, if we were not both quite mistaken, and if to properly do the work of the people, an Assembly of 41 Members was required, how could it be wrong to give the earliest possible effect to the Redistribution Act, which was unanimously adopted? The answer to this complaint is complete. Mr. Haultain understands the constitution too well to be ignorant of the fact that a Redistribution which makes any material change in the composition of a Parliament is always looked upon as the very best possible reason for dissolution. The matter may be presented more strongly. It would be highly improper for a Government to hold on to office by the will of an

Inadequate and out-of-date Assembly. For me to have called the old House of 25 Members to deal with important laws, and perhaps pass upon contracts for railway construction would have left me open to severe censure in view of the declaration in which I had joined last May to effect that a House of 41 Members was needed. And I am deficient in knowledge of Mr. Haultain if he would not have moved the censure. Had I called the old House together in November and presented a Bill to aid railway companies, to construct and equip certain branch railway lines, Mr. Haultain would not have failed to condemn me. He would have denounced me for proposing to pledge the credit of the Province without the people ever having voted upon the question. I would have replied that the Assembly, representing the people, was gathered to pass upon the subject. What would Mr. Haultain say to that? Would he not say that this Assembly did not represent the people and that a new House with 41 Members in it was needed to truly represent the people? That is what he would say, and it would be true. He would condemn me, and I would have no defence. You see, I know my friend Mr. Haultain pretty well. I did not support him during 14 years,—I was not his chief newspaper supporter all those years without becoming acquainted with him and with his methods of political warfare. You have at the head of your Government one with many faults and shortcomings, one who does not seek to deny many deficiencies, but he is not so altogether foolish and shortsighted as to proceed with open eyes into the defenceless position that your Government would have occupied next November, if no general election had been held, and if we had presented to the old Assembly, the important measures which are contemplated and which we believe must be taken up unless a large number of settlers are to be allowed to grow disheartened over failure of action looking towards their relief in the matter of lack of railway facilities. And in this you have our

Second Main Reason for Dissolution

The Government, not hastily, but after many months' study, after hearing many representations, after receiving many petitions, and after having to listen to some very straight-

talk on the question last spring from our own supporters in the House, came to the decision that it is necessary to act, and act at once, on the railway extensions question. How can we act? We cannot profitably pay cash subsidies. To build short lines by the Government to be at the mercy of the big roads would be foolish policy. We looked over the whole ground. Manitoba's experience with the scheme of bond guarantee shows us the solution of the problem. That experience proves that given reasonable caution as to the class of lines guaranteed, the aid never costs a dollar in cash. As long as the roads are in fertile country, the traffic pays the interest. The Government pays nothing. It is a loan of credit, nothing more. And if a bad thing befel and the companies defaulted, then the roads would fall into possession of the Government. This is the policy we decided upon. I confess it took me some time to get past a certain prejudice. When Manitoba entered heavily into this policy I was amongst those who doubted the wisdom of it. But I see that Manitoba has obtained railway facilities and competition by the policy, and so far has not paid a cent in cash.

Solution of Blockade Problem

I learned one thing from Premier Roblin when we held the first conference on the elevator question last spring, and it was this, that in Southern Manitoba, where the Canadian Northern is well established and able to actively compete against the Canadian Pacific for the wheat traffic, the wheat blockade is a thing unknown. Elevators down there are scarcely ever filled. That fact, I think, was what operated to finally destroy the prejudice which prevailed in my mind against the bond guarantee policy of Manitoba. We all know that Saskatchewan loses hundreds of thousands of dollars every fall by the wheat blockade. You could afford to have your Government pay the interest on railroads, if by so doing the wheat blockade was prevented. My colleagues and myself studied the matter very, very seriously. We reached decision as I have stated. But we could not ignore the fact that we had no mandate from the people to begin pledging the credit of Saskatchewan for railway bonds. Take it for granted, says Mr. Haultain. Well, I fancy I

hear Mr. Haultain saying something very different if I had presumed to take it for granted, and had dared to make contracts with the railway companies. The country would have resounded again with his cries of tyranny and coercion, and against this high-handed Scott outfit presuming to use authority which the people had never granted.

A Question of Courage

In my eight years of public life, I do not think I can accuse myself of want of courage at any juncture when courage was needed, and there are times when men in public position require some courage if they are to fulfil their duty. On the floor of Parliament, when I was there, many big questions were dealt with. Entire harmony did not always prevail. Some powerful influences were at times arrayed against measures proposed to benefit the position of the western settler. I cannot accuse myself, and I think that even my most bitter opponents fail to accuse me of neglecting to stand up and fight at such times whether it was the Manufacturers' Association or Director Osler, of the C.P.R., that had to be fought, or even a personal and political friend, such as was the late Mr. Tarte, whom I both admired and liked, because he was a man who won both affection and admiration, when your interests demanded it. In the school question crisis at Ottawa in February, 1905, when with Mr. Sifton I stood out for the educational freedom of these two new Provinces which in the end was granted.—stood out against my own political friends and leaders. I was certainly not impelled by cowardice. It was scarcely cowardice which controlled me in August, 1905, when I resigned a safe seat in the Commons to confront Mr. Haultain in a fight on ground where it was boasted he was impregnable, and in which it was said I would be wiped out of political existence and buried beyond hope of resurrection. (Cheers). When the new Assembly met for the first time the task was difficult enough, and you will not wonder if I confess that I felt the responsibility almost overwhelming. The only man I had who had ever been in the old Assembly was Thos. MacNutt, and he was chosen Speaker. My five sessions at Ottawa, beyond making my knees less

wobbly, were of little service, because as regards rules and procedure, the private member at Ottawa who is as busy as I was kept while there pays as little attention as the average man pays to the rising and setting of the sun. Mr. Lamont had been one session at Ottawa. No other man on our side had seen the floor of any legislative chamber. And against us were lined up the veteran Mr. Haultain, a former Speaker, Archie Gillis, an ex-Minister, Dr. Elliott, and in addition, Brown of Souris, a Liberal, and one of the ablest young men in the Province. Our task was formidable looking in the last degree, and if I felt almost overwhelmed and a little appalled, can you wonder. At all events I faced it.

Prince Albert County Horror

The Prince Albert County outrage perpetrated by foolish friends who were really the worst enemies we had did not brighten our outlook. In fact all our other difficulties combined were as nothing compared with the horror of that Prince Albert County affair. No other word describes it. It was a veritable horror, and I almost shudder now when I look back over the opening days of that first session in 1906 when the Magistrate's enquiry at Prince Albert was going on and remember the blackness of the cloud which the exposures were casting over an untried, inexperienced Government that had plenty of ordinary troubles to contend against without having to rest under the disgrace of that episode. Any way whatever our mistakes and sins I do not think we failed to confront our task with courage. The McInnis bribery charge was a sufficient test of courage in itself. That was as ugly a trial of nerve as any man ever had to meet, and now it is all past I can tell you, and perhaps McInnis may get satisfaction from it, that the few gray hairs I have in my head—and at my years these have no business to be there,—the few gray hairs I have in my head appeared in the course of that trial in which I had pledged my word to clear my name or get out of public life. None was there before and none has come since. I will never wish for my worst enemy the ordeal which the unspeakable villainy, treachery and meanness of

McInnis compelled me to face. To go back to private life would be a great relief, but to go out in disgrace is an awful thing to contemplate, and one single prejudiced member of the jury could have made such fate my own. Well, at all events, my lawyers and close associates are aware whether it was my courage which ever gave signs of weakening at any stage of the procedure. Compromise proposals were made and urged upon me. My answer was always the same. I had given a solemn pledge and it must be redeemed. Without full retraction and apology by McInnis the trial must go on.

Settlement of Difficult Questions

Of all the problems arising in three years of law-making and management I am not conscious of shirking in any case. We fixed the Member's indemnity and Mr. Haultain played the part of the cheapest sort of trickster. We located the capital. It was not settled without difficulty. I believed Regina was the place, not because I lived there but for the reason that it was as central and as advantageous as any other place and that it had one clearly prior right in that it had been the Territorial capital for 25 years. Mr. Haultain says that he favored Regina because he lived there, but how far did he act in line with his opinion? He admits he did nothing to assist. More than that, he admits that he acted to hinder. "I saw that Mr. Scott was in a tangle," he declares, "and I did what I could to put him into a worse tangle." There was statesmanship for you. No mere politician is Mr. Haultain. I am sure you all agree. (Laughter). It must have been statesmanship. It was certainly not political sagacity. Ready to sacrifice Regina. Ready to sacrifice Saskatoon. Well, both Saskatoon and Regina understand that kind of statesmanship and on 14th August said what they thought of it. And Scott came out of the tangle free to take the honest hand and look into the honest eye of his friends both in Regina and in Saskatoon because he had faced whatever difficulty there was in the task with perfect candour and honesty.

The University Location

When a month ago from Moose Jaw came very embarrassing and very

pointed questions about the University location, was it Haultain or Scott who had the courage to return the straight answer? The University Act places on the Board of Governors the duty of locating the institution. That is a statement I make advisedly. It is strictly true. The Board includes the President and eight representative citizens of Saskatchewan. These men were expected to study thoroughly the whole question and fix the location. I repeat that it was never contemplated that the Board's decision as to location would be questioned by the Government. True, the Act gives us the power of veto, but that power was given only to be exercised in matters of expenditure. As the Government must provide the moneys it was necessary to make the Government responsible as to the amounts to be expended. It would not do to leave the Board free for instance to begin a million dollar building if the Government was only ready to furnish half a million for a building. But it was intended that the Board and it alone should decide the location. In the heat of the election, then, a set of questions came from Moose Jaw asking Mr. Haultain and me to state whether in event of the board selecting Regina we would refuse to sanction the selection. I gave a straight answer. I said distinctly that I would not interfere with the Board's choice of location. The true intent and spirit of the Act left me no freedom to give any other answer. I should have been ashamed to play fast and loose with the question because no man who took part in passing the Act could honestly give an answer different from the one I gave. Did Mr. Haultain make a straight answer? Did he give an honest answer? Have you seen his answer? It was the shifty politician's answer. It could be construed both ways. His friends could use it in the canvass and make it appear as a promise to Moose Jaw, but had Mr. Haultain gained power he could have denied that the answer contained any promise to Moose Jaw. If his answer won him Moose Jaw City he is welcome to that kind of a victory. When I can retain power only at the expense of honesty and fair dealing with my friends in Moose Jaw and elsewhere in the Province I shall not

want to be in power. (Cheers). But Mr. Haultain went further. He set out in his answer that it was the Government and not the Board that will be responsible for selecting the site for the University. When I saw that report I said at Regina, and I repeat it here now, that if the Government is to be held fully responsible, then the Government is going to make the selection. (Cheers). If Mr. Haultain adheres to that position we shall change the Act and take the duty off the Board of Governors. We coped with the capital location and I am not afraid to cope with the University location. If he likes I shall give Mr. Haultain another chance to play the statesman by helping Scott farther into a tangle.

We have not been afraid to deal with other questions. Your able member, Mr. Ens, who sat with us on the Redistribution Committee can tell you whether it was Haultain or Scott who got into the tangle upon that sometimes troublesome subject. Mr. Ens can tell you whether shifty political trickery or plain, straight dealing proved the better policy on that question. We have not shirked the telephone problem. We are not shirking the rural municipal problem. We did not shirk the duty of taking firm hold of the vexed liquor problem. We took what both temperance advocates and the liquor men have been good enough to say was strikingly bold action on the question, and to me the best evidence that our treatment of it was at once skilful, proper and successful is the fact that our opponents in the campaign just ended did their best to make out that at least half the credit for our new Liquor Act belonged to them. As to that I need only say this. While Mr. Haultain did not dare oppose our Bill every friend of temperance in the Province knows perfectly well that from Mr. Haultain himself no such law could ever be obtained and never would have been obtained.

Took Only Possible and Proper Course

"I have hastily mentioned a few facts regarding our three years' work to establish my claim that want of courage has not been one of the

Government's side. But I certainly did lack the courage to face the condemnation which I know full well Mr. Haultain and his whole party would have thundered against us if we had proposed to pledge the credit of Saskatchewan on railway bonds before receiving the people's mandate for such action. To me it always seems that the straightforward policy is the best policy. If there had been no Redistribution Act to make an election necessary, the railway situation made an election constitutionally proper and necessary. The time had come in our view for action to provide branch line extensions. Before taking action it was essentially proper that our policy should be plainly laid before the people and their voice taken. It is simply amazing that any person could be found to raise objection to such course. By every rule of common sense and political propriety it was the fair course, the honest course, the proper course. Whether or not it was the courageous course I shall not say. If I had believed what Mr. Haultain's friends during three years never ceased to boast—if I had expected the annihilation which they said would overtake the Government whenever the people got a chance at us, I dare say I should have hung on to office the full term and then made my last political will and testament. Our dissolution for cause at the end of three years indicated that we had confidence in the people, as we believed they had confidence in us, and the outcome proves that we were not mistaken, and that our confidence was not misplaced. The cry that there was no proper reason for the dissolution was probably a very good side issue in the campaign to draw the attention of electors from the real issues, but a full and fair review of the whole position cannot fail to lead to the conviction not only that the complaint is groundless, but that in dissolving and submitting our record and policy to the people when we did, the Government took the only course open to a constitutional Government, an honest Government, all of which specifications your Government tries to live up to. (Cheers). First, we should have been open to censure if we had continued in office by the will of an Assembly which all parties concerned

had joined in declaring to be no longer truly representative of the Province. Secondly, we should have been absolutely defenceless against the censure that would be invited by our presuming to guarantee railway bonds before this highly important question had ever been laid before the people. But this is by no means our whole justification for the dissolution. I submit with absolute confidence that if we had had no Redistribution Act and no new railway policy either, the Government had abundant justification for appealing to the people in July upon its other proposals—upon the line we had mapped out on the liquor question, upon our several educational measures including the scheme of buying and distributing school books to the children free of cost, upon the proposed law creating Rural Municipalities, upon the laws we have passed to tax railways, banks, loan companies, and the other corporations, and especially upon our telephone programme. The fact is that our bill-of-fare was too full. It contained so much that many of the good things in it were lost sight of. When a man sits down at a table in a big city restaurant he cannot hope to make away with everything on the long, confusing card which the smiling waiter places in front of him. (Laughter). I am afraid our card contained so much that many of its good things received altogether too little attention.

An Ideal Telephone Policy.

The telephone policy alone would have borne examination by the people in a general election. We propose to link together all the main towns in the Province by trunk telephone lines to be constructed and conducted by a Department of the Government. And in addition, we propose to assist the settlers to create their own telephone systems and link them up with our trunk lines. In a very short time under our policy there will be no community in Saskatchewan which really desires to have the telephone and whose people possess any enterprise at all that need be without the advantage of it. This is a broad statement, a very comprehensive statement. But it is a true statement, and if you look into our pol-

icy you will see its truth. By offering to supply poles free to every rural company that shows the enterprise necessary to go in for a local telephone plant we put within the ability of every locality in Saskatchewan the possession of its telephone system. The policy is the result of many days, yes even weeks of the most patient and anxious study by Francis Dagger, our expert, and the members of the Government. I am free to tell you that we literally sweated over the rural end of the problem many anxious hours. The scheme is our very own. We copied from nowhere because we could find no scheme in existence anywhere suited to Saskatchewan's conditions. It is our very own, and I am proud of it. Since we hit upon it and mapped it out, our scheme has been submitted to several telephone experts elsewhere, and with no exception they have declared it to be the ideal solution of the problem of rural telephone service. (Cheers). So I say if we had nothing else to justify the general election this summer, the telephone proposals alone were ample justification. The telephone programme must involve large initial expenditures. We must construct several hundreds of miles of trunk line. We must purchase the Bell system and the Saskatchewan Company's system which centres at Moose Jaw. And the rural development must mean a large outlay by the Government because we will buy and pay freight charges upon every pole set up in the Province.

Trusted the People

Was it wrong to ask the people's sanction for this programme before going on with it? Why the objection against the course we followed in obtaining the people's sanction is the most absurd thing I ever heard of. (Cheers). It is sheerly ridiculous. So the people of Saskatchewan thought. They declared so on August 14th. After all, I daresay the very best justification of the dissolution and of the general election and of our record and policy and of our position in any and all the matters we have dealt with and which formed the items of complaint against us before the campaign, during the campaign, and since the end

of the campaign, is to be found in the voice of the people, recorded at the polls on 14th August. (Cheers). I trusted the people. The outcome shows I had a right to do so. I believed the people trusted me. I had never given them cause to distrust me. When it was necessary in the settlers' interest I was ready to fight railway corporations or the tariff protected corporations; I was ready to tax the speculators' lands to help towards the expenses of the little red school; I was ready to join Mr. Calder to put an end to the robbery of our people by the notorious Ontario school book ring which seemed to hold Mr. Haultain under its thumb, and which was taxing us 187 per cent. on every school reader used by our children; I was ready to abolish liquor from clubs and to give temperance laws that the sober public conscience of the Province desired; I was ready to stand up against the Roman Catholic Church in February, 1905, when clerical control of Saskatchewan's schools was proposed, and equally ready to stand by and with and for the Roman Catholic minority in London, in North Oxford, in Ottawa and in Saskatchewan when later on the Tory party with Mr. Haultain as a main mischief maker, attacked Roman Catholics unreasonably and threatened to deny them the petty remnant of cherished privilege in the Separate schools in Saskatchewan to which by the spirit and letter of the Canadian Act of Union they were clearly and distinctly entitled. I was ready to fight against the Tory policy of hatred and prejudice whether in 1905 against Catholics, or in 1907 in the pretended interest of Catholics when our High Schools Act was passed, or as every year and all the time the policy of prejudice and hatred is turned by the Tories against the foreign settlers whom we have invited to come to Canadian shores. I knew I had given the people, my good friends, the common people, of whom I am proud to be one myself, and especially the settler on his homestead battling bravely under pioneer handicaps, no cause to distrust me, and I am pleased and proud to have the emphatic assurance of their continued trust. Their verdict was hearty enough, but I well know that if the

unusually early harvest had not caught us — and in the ordinary season wheat cutting does not begin until about the 20th of August—I well know that if so many farmers had not been compelled to begin harvesting before election day, but had all got to the polls, the Liberal popular majority over the Province would have been vastly greater than it was. Hundreds of favorable votes were lost to us by the wheat ripening at least ten days earlier than I expected when on June 13th, the day following prorogation of the session, I discussed the idea of holding elections before harvest, with my colleagues, and the decision in favor of the idea was reached. My own majority in Swift Current would be 500 or 600 only for this cause. Sutherland in Saskatoon County would have 300 or 400 majority, and Sheppard in Moose Jaw County an equal majority if polling could have taken place ten days earlier.

Working for the Farmer

But the date could not be made earlier. All the forms used in the elections had first to be freshly prepared because we worked under an entirely new Act. These had all to be printed and distributed. Between the date of our decision on the 13th June and polling day not an hour of the two months' time was lost. Indeed, I wonder now how we managed to make all the necessary mechanical preparations in so short a time. They say that Laurier told me to dissolve when I went to Ottawa in July. Instructions given in July would be entirely too late for elections before harvest. It needed every hour from the end of the session until polling day, and in the end we found that harvest came on about ten days sooner than it generally comes. And we were heavy losers by it because it is in the rural districts, in the "back settlements" as is so often sneeringly said, where the Liberal strength lies. We Liberals are not ashamed of this fact. He may be a "back settler," his hands may be roughened by hard work, but the eye of the average home-steader in this Province is not less clear, nor is his vote less intelligent than those of the dweller in towns. He is the man who is really making the country. But for him we would

have no towns. But for him there would be nothing for railways to do. As long as the Liberal party remains worthy of the support of the back settler the Liberal party will be the party for me, because he is the bone and sinew and the best intelligence and true foundation of the development of this Province. (Cheers.) It is for him mainly that we worked to get the Hudson's Bay Road. It is for him that our branch lines policy is framed. It is for him that we bent our minds to solve the telephone problem. It is for his benefit that we are taxing the holdings of the speculator and the big company by the Supplementary Revenue Act for education to lighten the load of taxation borne by him as a public school ratepayer. It is for him that we propose to make free distribution of school books. In his interest, we will pass the Rural Municipal Bill. They say the back settler is the Scott Government's main support. Why shouldn't he be? We shall strive to merit his support. We shall give him free school readers. We shall give him the advantage of the telephone at lowest cost. He will get the Hudson's Bay road because we worked in season and out of season for it, and he will get that road at Dominion cost instead of at provincial cost because of our stand on the question. (Cheers.) We shall give him more roads and bridges and more ferries and more fire-guards and better schools. We shall give him more railways and better railway facilities and in turn these will result in quicker service and lower rates by which he will reap advantage.

Best Autonomy Terms in Canada

We can do all these things because we have better autonomy terms than British Columbia or Manitoba or Nova Scotia or New Brunswick. (Cheers.) Premier Roblin says so, Premier McBride says so, Premier Whitney told me so personally. They are not witnesses partial to Laurier nor to me. We can do these things because these are the things we devote our time to rather than to useless and expensive and senseless law suits which are all that Mr. Haultain can think of or talk about. Our

time has been spent pushing forward the Hudson's Bay project. Mr. Haultain proposed to waste time by setting out to delay construction of the road. Is it any wonder that Saskatchewan refused him and his foolish policy? Saskatchewan wants progress. Our policy ensures continued peace, it means continued activity along profitable lines, it cannot help but bring continued and even accelerated development. (Cheers.)

Laurier Will Win

"Just another word. It was charged that I obeyed Laurier in holding the elections. I have contradicted the charge straightly and emphatically. It is positively untrue. (Cheers.) The dissolution was decided on by myself and my colleagues for excellent reasons, abundant reasons even, four-fold reasons in fact, in the Redistribution, the railway situation, the Rural Municipal policy and our telephone programme,—it was decided on and the elections were held to suit the people of Saskatchewan without regard to any other interest and without the most remote suggestion from Sir Wilfrid Laurier or anybody else. (Cheers.) But if our opponents are to be believed, if we may draw conclusions from the things we heard and saw during our campaign, then it would seem plain that the Saskatchewan result is a sign of the result to be expected "when the leader whom we all love and revere, Sir Wilfrid Laurier — (Cheers) — the leader who in this generation in Canada is admitted by all parties without distinction of creed, race, color or politics to stand in a class all by himself, admirable, irreproachable, peerless—(Cheers) — a sign of the result to be expected when our beloved leader in the Dominion realm next submits himself and his policy to the people. (Cheers.) In other words, your humble servant may have done a thing to materially influence the question whether progressive Liberal rule or reactionary Tory rule shall prevail in Canada in future. Guilty or not guilty? And if guilty what penalty? If true, is it for the people of Saskatchewan to object, this Province which of all Provinces has in the past decade pro-

fited and which stands in the immediate future to profit the most by the sane and successful policy of Laurier on the tariff, on immigration, on the public lands, on railways, and especially his courageous Hudson's Bay Railway programme? If found guilty I shall not complain... (Cheers.) If anything that I have done or may by the favor of Providence be able to do helps in any degree to preserve for Saskatchewan a continuance of Laurier and his policy I am confident that it will not be counted against me in the reckoning by this fair, young Province whose interests and whose welfare are worthy of some sacrifice and some unselfish devotion on the part of us all. (Cheers long-continued.)

Other Toasts and Speeches

The toast of the Legislative Assembly was proposed suitably by H. C. Wetherby, of Rosthern, and replied to by W. C. Sutherland, M.L.A., Saskatoon County; A. P. McNab, M.L.A., Saskatoon City, and Dr. Neely, M.L.A., Humboldt. "The Province" was proposed by W. Hackney, Rosethern, and responded to by Senator T. O. Davis. The Senator was in his happiest vein. He congratulated himself that Mr. Ens was one of his pupils, and that he had turned out so creditably. He instanced some of the tactics of the Conservatives during the recent election, his remarks upon some of the apostles of purity sent into the country by the Roblin Government to help Haultain to win out creating great merriment. He wound up by impressing upon Liberals the necessity for organization for the coming Dominion battle.

Gus Fornier, of Duck Lake, proposed "The Liberal party," which was responded to by H. Graham, of Vonda, and A. J. Bell, of Prince Albert. The latter asked the audience to believe that the recent result there was not the true opinion of his city. In each of the business wards, Hon. Mr. Turgeon had been well supported, and they owed their defeat to newcomers to the country, who were influenced only by local issues, and who made it their boast that they did not understand the wider questions of Canadian politics.

The banquet, which was altogether a very great success and very largely attended, continued until 3 o'clock this morning.

